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THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL JOURNAL

Continuing "The Elementary School Teacher"

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THE SMITH-TOWNER BILL

This issue of the *Elementary School Journal* is devoted largely to the discussion of the Smith-Towner Bill. This bill was drafted early in 1918 and was discussed at several meetings of the Commission of the National Education Association of which Professor Strayer was chairman. The first move toward the formation of such a commission was made at the Atlantic City meeting of the Department of Superintendence in February. Subsequently the commission was enlarged so as to include the members of the central committees of the association.

The *Elementary School Journal* is published monthly from September to June by the University of Chicago. It is edited and managed by the Department of Education as one of a series of educational publications. The series, including also the *School Review* and the *Supplementary Educational Monographs*, is under a joint editorial committee and covers the whole field of educational interests.

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The bill in its original form was introduced in the Senate early in the fall of 1918. The first draft of the bill aroused some objection on the part of a number of state superintendents because it gave the federal department of education certain powers of supervision over the states. Furthermore, it did not have at that time the active support of the Teachers' Federation because, among other matters, it contained no reference to teachers' salaries.

When the bill failed to receive the attention of Congress which was expected for it by March 4, 1919, it was modified so as to satisfy the state superintendents and others who objected to federal supervision of education, and also the Teachers' Federation. In its new form it was reintroduced in 1919 and is now in the hands of the education committees of the Senate and of the House.

The bill itself is included in this issue of the *Elementary School Journal* so that it may be read in connection with the discussions.

The four papers which are printed for and against the bill constituted the program of the Society of the College Teachers of Education at the Cleveland meeting on the afternoon of Monday, February 23, 1920. Mr. Capen's paper is as he read it. Mr. Strayer spoke, having put his paper into the hands of the secretary. Mr. Burris read the major part of his paper, omitting the first section which is here printed, namely, that referring to the general attitude of the National Education Association on this bill and military training. Mr. Judd's paper was read to the point where discussion begins on the appropriation of one hundred million dollars, and from this point on he gave in abbreviated form the contents of the paper.

The discussion which followed the papers was marred by personalities which indicate a spirit far from that of true scientific interest in producing the best possible measure.

Immediately after the discussion Mr. Whitney made the following remarks. His statements are quoted from a stenographic report of the meeting.

I want to offer just one word. I feel that this bill now before us has a good many defects, and yet at the same time, it seems to me, it is fair, and we have the best educational bill that has ever been introduced into Congress. Therefore, I wish to offer the following resolution:

"That the Society of the College Teachers of Education reaffirm its endorsement of the Smith-Towner Bill, and that it repledge itself to do all it can to secure the enactment of this bill as speedily as possible."

The vote on Mr. Whitney's resolution was recorded as 63 to 2. The significance of this vote will be somewhat clearer when it is pointed out that the society at its regular business meeting the next morning adopted unanimously the following resolution:

The Society of the College Teachers of Education approves the principle that when a federal department of education is created or organized it shall include the Federal Board for Vocational Education.

MR. PROSSER ON FEDERAL SUBSIDIES FOR EDUCATION

Mr. Prosser writes the editors of the *Elementary School Journal* that he did not threaten to oppose the Smith-Towner Bill if it included the Federal Board for Vocational Education. Other letters in the hands of the editors on this matter indicate that the impression prevails in the commission that such a threat was delivered. At all events, the form of the bill which evades this issue was influenced by discussions contributed by Mr. Prosser.

Mr. Prosser wishes it understood further that he spoke in whatever he said to the commission on his personal authority and not for the Federal Board for Vocational Education. He favors a federal board rather than a cabinet officer, in this respect agreeing with Mr. Burris. He believes that a measure creating a board would be safer, would unify interests, and would attract the support of many who will not now accept the bill.

So far as these statements modify in any wise the statements made in one of the papers which follow, they should be accepted as superseding the paper. So far as they bring forward unsolved issues regarding the bill, they will undoubtedly impress the thoughtful reader as very significant.

The fact is that there is at the present moment a powerful federal agency equipped with large funds to spend in subsidies for vocational education. This federal agency is empowered by law to supervise closely the operations of the states in the organization of vocational courses. This federal agency evidently was discussed by the Commission of the National Education Association. The commission was opposed to the methods of the Federal Board for Vocational Education. In fact, it took steps, while it was in session discussing its bill, formally to oppose action which was being taken by Congress to turn over rehabilitation work to the board. The director of vocational education on his personal authority made

statements to the commission, and when the draft of the bill appeared it was silent on this board and on all problems of vocational education.

It is the belief of the present writer that American teachers and school officers do not want a department of education that has to beat around this or any other such issue. They want a department with courage and strength enough to make it absolutely certain that vocational education will not be divorced from general education. Until this one issue is brought out of the fog all other matters will have to be recognized as in doubt.

The Federal Board for Vocational Education has not satisfied the school people of this country. They are opposed to its methods of dictation. Their representatives drafted a bill which goes so far against federal supervision as to excite suspicion that the attempt has been made to set up a policy of subsidy without supervision which is impossible. Is it satisfactory to these same school people that Congress shall create a department of education which includes the Bureau of Education and is not by the same act put in charge of the Federal Board for Vocational Education? Is it conceivable that the school people of this country will be satisfied to have this matter evaded? It is the belief of the present writer that those responsible for the Smith-Towner Bill have practiced an unpardonable evasion. It is his further belief that the school people of this country have not known about this evasion. The addresses on the bill have ordinarily made no reference to it, and the contents of the bill have been lightly passed over.

The unvarnished fact is that not one school teacher in a hundred has ever read the Smith-Towner Bill. Not one in a thousand has made a critical study of it. Not one in ten thousand knows how it was drafted; and nobody knows what it implies. Yet this bill is ratified here, there, and elsewhere, because it is regarded as the proper thing to do.

TEACHERS COLLEGE

The General Education Board has given Teachers College one million dollars toward a new building which is to be erected on 120th Street, east of the present main building. This new building is to be a library and recitation building and will relieve the present congestion which arises from the large attendance at the institution.

The gift of the General Education Board is a worthy acknowledgment of the large service that Teachers College has rendered to American schools. Founded in 1888, Teachers College was the first institution which undertook studies of education at the university level. In the years that have passed since its founding its students have gone to every state in the Union and into foreign countries. Its contributions to the science and philosophy of education have been recognized on every hand. Other institutions of higher education have been stimulated by its example to develop departments and schools of education until now all the leading universities of the country are co-operating in the work which Teachers College inaugurated.

To Dean Russell is due the largest credit for carrying Teachers College through somewhat more than two decades of successful operation. He came to the institution in 1897 at a time when it was in process of reorganization. To him is to be credited most of the large policies which have guided its organization. He has been remarkably skilful in the conduct of its finances. Operating with a very small endowment, the institution has derived its support in very large measure from student fees. Dean Russell has carried out under these conditions a masterful financial policy. He is to be congratulated on the recognition which comes to his administration through this gift.

The total cost of the building is to be about \$3,000,000. The campaign for the \$2,000,000 which will bring to the institution the large fund provided by the General Education Board is under way, and it is hoped that the much-needed building may be begun in the near future. In the meantime, all who are interested in the promotion of professional studies in education will join in congratulations to Teachers College on its success and its large prospects.

SOVIETISM AMONG TEACHERS

In the book review section of this issue of the *Elementary School Journal* some extracts are given from a recent book which advocates the wholesale abolition of supervision in American schools. The doctrine presented in that book is very popular at the present time in many quarters. In some quarters where there is no immediate prospect of the discontinuance of superintendencies

and supervisorships a good deal of energy is often spent in the effort to weaken the influence of these overhead positions.

Concurrent with the spread of the demand for the abolition of supervision, and often confused with it, is another demand which is sometimes put in an extreme form, sometimes in a mild form. It is the demand that teachers be heard through teachers' councils in the government of schools. There is very general agreement that something should be done to bring teachers and administrators into sympathetic contact with each other.

How shall one frame a policy which meets the legitimate demands and avoids the mistake of substituting government by teachers' soviets for government by well-considered central policies? The answer to this question will be reached most quickly and directly if we learn that government is after all a matter of principles as well as personalities. Schools must be guided by broad policies. Schools must determine the results of their achievements in order to direct the future activity of all who participate in their work. Schools must have clear vision of the ends toward which teaching trends. Schools must be guided by knowledge as to children's mental development and needs.

Once these broad demands are formulated it is easy to answer the questions: What personalities are needed, and what subdivision of functions is essential to the conduct of schools? It is only frank to say that most teachers are wholly unable through experience and training to cope with the large problems of educational organization. That writer who would turn the organization of courses of study and matters of school equipment over to the average teacher is basking in the sunlight of happy ignorance. A soviet of average teachers would run amuck in any school in this country.

The fact is that soviets of teachers have from time to time taken possession of various aspects of American education. The National Education Association is at the present moment a pathetic example of bare survival from an experience of domination by a soviet. Certain school systems could be found where control has been taken by forces too ignorant to lead and too cowardly to come into the open.

What is needed in these times of stress and strain is clear vision of the fundamental fact that order and co-ordination are virtues which come only when time and energy and the best thinking

that we can command are spent in securing them. Wherever teachers are given a share in councils they must be ready, if they accept responsibility, to study the problems with which they are to cope. No teacher has a right to suggest public policies unless he or she has studied them. No teacher has a right to throw down an established practice unless he or she can give a valid reason for so doing. Power means responsibility, and what American teachers need before they attempt to supersede supervisory schemes is a long, serious lecture on the need of sober wisdom on the part of those who assume responsibility.

PUBLICATION OF TESTS

There has come to hand an attractive circular sent out by the World Book Company advertising various series of tests which that company is prepared to furnish schools. There were announced in this circular tests on various school subjects and tests of general intelligence.

To anyone who is interested in the promotion of the scientific movement in education this circular is more than the advertisement of a book concern. It is a clear indication that the testing movement has arrived. The processes of testing in many lines are sufficiently standardized to be recognized as mere routine from this time on. Teachers expect to test their work. Boards of education and communities are not satisfied unless superintendents include in their reports some accounts of measurements made in the schools. The first experimental period when tests were mere laboratory devices is past; the period of commercial distribution is at hand.

There is one warning which must be added to this optimistic comment on the arrival of commercialized tests. It is the warning that tests do not give themselves. Nor do they automatically interpret their results. One would feel safer about the future of the testing movement if one could make sure that tests were always used by those who know how to manipulate them and to interpret their outcomes. For this reason one has greater confidence in the co-operative bureaus set up in various institutions than one can have at the outset in a set of commercial tests which are sent out into the world without even the slender support of a co-operative bureau. There will doubtless be some misuse of tests now that they are abroad alone. There will result some drastic criticisms of tests because of the ignorant misapplications from which they have

suffered. But perhaps it is well that it should be so in order that there shall come out of all this trial and error tests which are very usable.

A FRENCH CHILD'S LETTER

Odette Gastinel, a little French girl, wrote a letter to American children. The first paragraph describes a battle-field on the Belgian border with the German armies on one side of the brook and the Allies on the other. The translation is as follows:

It was only a little river, almost a brook. . . . One could talk from one side to the other without raising one's voice, and the birds could fly over it with one sweep of their wings. And on the two banks there were millions of men, the one turned toward the other, eye to eye. But the distance which separated them was greater than the stars in the sky; it was the distance which separates right from injustice.

The ocean is so vast that the seagulls do not dare to cross it. During seven days and seven nights the great steamships of America going at full speed, drive through the deep waters before the lighthouses of France come into view; but from one side to another the hearts are touching.

TEACHING HOMES ABOUT CONTAGION

The superintendent of schools of Litchfield, Connecticut, sends the following description of the method adopted in that town of educating families about contagion:

Whenever a contagious disease in a school child comes to the attention of the school medical authorities—and we take the precaution that such cases shall come to our attention—an appropriate notice is sent immediately to the parents.

With a case in the household the parents are very likely to read, digest, and apply the information.

To send out to each family a pamphlet containing all the notices is a waste of material. Such a pamphlet would probably be put away with a view to future use when the need arose, and in all probability would be lost.

The Litchfield plan is to strike quickly and thoroughly with the needed information at the right time.

Examples are reproduced of the letters sent to the homes. There is a letter for each disease, only one of which is given below.

The school wishes to prevent as far as possible the spread of contagious diseases among its pupils. Children with these diseases are excluded from school, and, in most cases, other children in the family who have not had the disease.

If the school is to see that all children, both sick and well, who might endanger the other pupils, first, be excluded from school, and second, be not allowed to return until, under the laws of the Sanitary Code of Connecticut, it is proper for them to do so, it must know at once when a pupil is taken down with such a disease.

Many families with measles, whooping cough, etc., do not have a doctor. A child stays away from school and comes down with a contagious disease. If the school is to be on its guard, it must know of these cases, and not days or a week after the illness began, but at once.

MEDICAL INSPECTOR, Litchfield Schools

THE SANITARY CODE OF THE STATE OF CONNECTICUT
Communicable Diseases (Contagious)

Regulation 8.—Parents, guardians, and householders to report suspected cases of communicable diseases (contagious).

Every parent, guardian, or householder shall report immediately (within twelve hours) to the local health officer any case or suspected case of communicable disease existing among persons in the house or apartment under his care, and give such further information as may be required except when such case or suspected case is under the supervision of a licensed physician.

GENERAL STATUTES—Revision of 1918

SECTION 2434. Violation of orders of health authority.

Every person who shall violate any provision of this chapter, or any legal order of a health officer or board of health, for which no other penalty is provided, shall be fined not more than five hundred dollars (\$500) or imprisoned not more than six months or both.

To the PARENTS or GUARDIAN of _____

Whooping cough is a disease which may cause great debility in very young children, especially if they are not in good physical condition. This applies as well to older children not in good condition. It is a long, tedious and distressing affair for the patients who have to suffer and for the parents who care for them.

Methods of infection.—The disease is spread by discharges sprayed or thrown from mouth or nose in coughing, sneezing, or spitting.

Children who have whooping cough are excluded from school. Why? To prevent the spread of the disease by means of contact while in the school. The school has now passed the case on to the parents who have a duty to perform. What is it? To see that their children who have the disease do not come in contact with other children who have not had it. Going to the post office, errands to the stores, any place where they expose others. It is not only a duty for parents to live up to this to the best of their ability; it is a crime not to. If your children were free from the disease, would you not like to see this matter observed by other families in the town so that your little ones might have a better chance to escape?

Whooping cough is a serious condition not to be lightly considered. The school has done its part by excluding them. That is easy. Now you have your part to play, the hard part to care for them and see them suffer and then this duty of joining with the school and trying to prevent as nearly as you can the spread of the disease.

Think of the love you have for your children and then think of the mothers who are hoping their children will escape. Consideration for others brings its

reward, and it will bear fruit for you during some other disease epidemic when your children are well and you are praying they may escape.

MEDICAL INSPECTOR, Litchfield Schools

SHORTAGE OF TEACHERS

The Bureau of Education supplies the following news bulletin:

The teacher-shortage situation, while in some parts of the country slightly better than last October, when the National Education Association made its inquiry, is still a very grave problem, according to reports received by the Bureau of Education, Department of the Interior.

On February 13 the Commissioner of Education found, on the basis of returns from state school officers, that there are 18,279 schools closed because of lack of teachers, and 41,900 schools taught by teachers characterized as "below standard but taken on temporarily in the emergency." The largest shortages are as follows: Kentucky, 2,250; Texas, 2,055; Virginia, 2,000; Georgia, 1,500; North Carolina, 700; Iowa, 600.

Substandard teachers are reported as follows: Texas, 4,000; Virginia, 3,500; Alabama, 3,500; Georgia, 3,000; Tennessee, 3,000; Minnesota, 1,880; Illinois, 1,200; Kentucky, 1,100; New York, 1,100; South Carolina, 1,000.

In response to the question, "What provision is made for children in territories where schools are closed?" eighteen states report that children are transferred to other schools, three states report no provision, one state reports "require some," two states report that the majority of children are losing the grade.

In response to the question, "Are people moving to centers of population?" six states report that no data are at hand; five states report "very little"; three states report a considerable movement, and four states report "none."

In response to the question, "To what extent are taxpayers interesting themselves in paying better salaries for teachers?" fourteen states report that the interest is general. One state reports "great interest," and one state reports very large interest, while another reports that they are "doing their best."

One significant fact in connection with the shortage of teachers is that 190 state, county, city, and private normal schools report 11,503 fewer students November 1, 1919, than they had the year previous to the war. These schools reporting represent 60 per cent of the total normal schools, and, on this basis, there would be a shortage of 19,170, and at graduation time, 1920, there will be 7,000 fewer graduates from the normal schools. Teacher-training departments in colleges show approximately the same falling off in those preparing to teach, although other departments show a great increase in enrolment.

"Another significant fact is revealed," says A. O. Neal of the Bureau's division of rural education, in commenting upon the situation. "Since 1890 there has been a continuous and increasing withdrawal of men teachers from the profession. The percentage of men teachers in 1890 was 37. In 1910 it had fallen to 22 per cent, and in 1918 to 17 per cent. In other words, in 1890 one teacher in three was a man; in 1910 one teacher in five; and in 1918 one teacher in six.

"The question of teachers' salaries is vital in this discussion, and a comparison of teachers' salaries from 1916 to 1918, the latest complete statistics available,

shows that in the two years from 1916 to 1918 the average teacher's salary advanced from \$563 per year to \$635 per year, an increase of \$72, or 13 per cent, in the two years. The total figures for 1918 show that the average salary for elementary teachers in the United States was \$606, and the average salary for high-school teachers, \$1,031. The Bureau is now collecting salary schedules from various states, giving the actual salaries received by individual teachers in three counties in each state. These show that the salaries of rural teachers are far below this average in many states, and that salaries as low as \$150 to \$200 per annum are found in many localities.

"Another cause of teachers withdrawing from the profession is found in the lack of provision made for suitable homes in the community where the teachers may become a part of the social organization. This is particularly true in rural districts, where in many communities they are providing teachers' homes in connection with the schools."

THE CITIZEN AND THE SCHOOLS

Just after the Cleveland meeting of the Department of Superintendence the citizens of Chicago were offered the following comment and news by one of the leading morning papers. That the man on the street is confused about the Chicago school situation will perhaps be more easily understood by those who do not live here after they have read these statements, all of which appeared in a single column.

CHICAGO SCHOOL SYSTEM CALLED MODEL FOR UNITED STATES

POWERS OF SUPERINTENDENT HERE RESPONSIBLE FOR STATUS,
MORTENSON SAYS

In direct contrast to the brand "Politics" which has been charged against Chicago's public-school system for years, Superintendent Peter A. Mortenson yesterday said that Chicago's system and Illinois' school laws are being looked to as a model by the entire nation.

He made this statement in an interview on national educational conditions as revealed at the annual meeting of the Department of Superintendence of the National Education Association, which he attended in Cleveland last week.

He said, "I heard William Ettinger, superintendent of New York's schools, discuss conditions there which make me believe that in Chicago's palmiest days of political scandal she was but a kindergarten compared with others as far as the effect of politics on the schools is concerned.

"As a matter of fact, educators regard Chicago's system as the one most free from politics and are endeavoring to establish similar conditions in their own communities.

"This is due to the new school law which makes the superintendent a statutory officer with a four-year term of office and places in him, instead of in the Board of Education, the power to initiate educational policies.

"Here the board has no power to change the superintendent's recommendations or to institute policies of its own except by a two-thirds vote. Otherwise it must either accept or reject.

"In other cities the superintendent is nothing but a teacher elected by the board of education to a certain position. Generally he is elected for a year.

"Power to inaugurate educational policies does not rest in him but in the board, any of the members of which may establish any new notion he chooses merely by making a motion from the floor and obtaining a majority vote."

Mr. Mortenson added that the Cleveland convention brought out the fact that all large cities are as seriously hit as Chicago on the shortage of teachers, most of them more so. All are confronted with serious building programs.

It was shown that the nation-wide affiliation of teachers with the American Federation of Labor, through the American Federation of Teachers, is growing rapidly, which fact was deplored by the delegates, although no official action was taken.

N. E. A. SPURNS CHICAGO FOR "CHADSEY DISGRACE"

CLEVELAND, O., Feb. 27.—When the National Education Association was invited today by Chicago to hold its next convention in that city the delegates voted to withdraw Chicago from a list of other cities which made the same proposition "until the disgrace accorded Superintendent C. E. Chadsey by the Chicago Board of Education be rescinded."

Dr. Chadsey was shorn of executive powers when the board which elected him was removed and a new board appointed.

The convention came to a close with the selection of Washington as next year's convention city. The resolutions adopted favor passage of the Smith-Towner Bill, providing for a secretary of education in the president's cabinet, and an annual federal school appropriation of \$100,000,000.